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Article 1

Yes, Mr. Tunis, College IS Worth While

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Bach's "Double Concerto"

By Bessie Spratt, '37

CALMER than sleeping, soothing to rest,
A quiet beauty lulling us, lest,
Careworn and heavy, we break from the strain
Of dragging the clanking, burdensome chain
Of duty and effort—
Our life's refrain.

Yes, Mr. Tunis, College *IS* Worth While

By *Walter Greenwood Barlow*, '38

ASKING the question in the title of his book, "Was College Worth While?" John R. Tunis extends his analysis of the Harvard class of 1911 over 230 pages, winding up with an answer which is decidedly negative. It is the custom at Harvard for the secretary of each class to gather together a Twenty-fifth Anniversary Report, which contains, as completely as possible, the records of the progress made by the class during the twenty-five years since the time of its graduation. Mr. Tunis, having studied the report for the class of '11, gives what he believes to be concrete evidence for assuming that the four years spent by the 541 men in the class were not justified.

On the face of it, the evidence supports the author's conviction; for the collective success of the 541 men has not been what one might expect of a choice section from the educated fraction of the populace. In his own words, Mr. Tunis says, "We had a higher education. From that segment should come the

pioneers of American thought, leaders in every phase of our culture. Is it too much to say that we have failed to produce these men?" If Mr. Tunis means that his class has not given us any nation-stirring minds, he is right. But it did produce men who sum themselves up thus: "I haven't piled up any great amount of the world's goods, but I've lived the life I most enjoy, got a peach of a wife, three boys who can stand the gaff in the woods and give me lots of pleasure and satisfaction."

Apparently, Mr. Tunis expected each individual man in his class to become, in a quarter of a century, a distinct success, both in the public eye and in his own estimation. Although 88 Harvard 1911's are today listed as failures, there are 23 names from the group given in *Who's Who*, and the yearly income for the class as a whole, including the failures, is \$4,450 per man. While *Who's Who* and \$4,450 a year are not infallible criteria of success, they are at least indications of it. However, in spite of occasional cases, Mr. Tunis has grounds for assuming that the Harvard men of '11 have little to show for their four college years.

FOR Mr. Tunis to conclude that this particular class did not make the best use of its college years is one thing; but for him to deduce from his conclusion that the typical college education in 1911 was a wasteful investment is an entirely different one. The 541 men composing the Harvard class in 1911 were for the most part from well-to-do homes, homes steeped in Republican traditions. They represented only a certain portion of the country's population. A sample comment by a member of the class is: "I seem to be destined to march in the ranks of the conservatives, whether the goal be the seats of power or the lamp posts." Such dogged confidence in the *status quo* as could weather the Great War and the Crash in this fashion, will become even more ingrown and unprogressive as the years stretch on. I do not mean to condemn conservatism *per se*; I do intend to censure the society which could plant and nurture in the mind of the college man blind acceptance of the old in preference to intelligent adjustment to the demands of progress.

During the past twenty-six years, great changes have come about in the trends of college and university thinking. The War

and the Depression have been the parents of a generation which is less and less interested in the temporal and more and more interested in the enduring. Some people today, among them, doubtless, the old-line Conservative in the preceding paragraph, have the opinion that the colleges of 1937 are turning out a shrieking litter of radicals, anarchists, and crackpots. In reality, there is growing up a generation of healthy skeptics, eager to take its share of the responsibilities, and bound and determined to do all it can to rectify the mistakes of the past generation. The college man of the present as compared with the one of 1911, is doubtless little further advanced mentally. He is, however, decidedly more serious about his work. To him, a college education represents something which has to be fought for, not merely another irksome burden to be borne prior to obtaining a sinecure with the family firm. International relations and economic problems have assumed ascendancy in collegiate discussions over club presidencies, sports, and current entertainment menus.

I RESPECTFULLY submit that the conclusion which Mr. Tunis makes in his volume should be viewed in the light of what it truly represents that it is one man's opinion based upon his own criteria, that the college education gained by 541 men at one college, Harvard, twenty-six years ago, was not worth the time and money it took to obtain it. Under no circumstances should it be interpreted to mean either that the college of 1911 was an unnecessary growth on the face of society, or that the college today is not worth the effort.

